

REMARKS

In the last Office Action, claims 1 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,294,911 to Shimazawa et al. ("Shimazawa") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,657,431 to Xiao. Claims 2-7 and 9 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim and were otherwise indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The drawings were objected to because the blank boxes in Figs. 1-4 should be labeled with descriptive text, and appropriate correction was required.

Applicant and applicant's attorney acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowability concerning claims 2-7 and 9.

In accordance with this response, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 9 and intervening dependent claim 8, thereby placing claim 1 in allowable form. In rewriting claim 1, the claim has been revised in formal respects to improve the wording and to better conform the claim to U.S. practice. Dependent claims 2-3 have been amended to conform to amended base claim 1 and to improve the wording.

Claims 4-9 have been canceled.

New claims 10-13 have been added, and independent claim 10 comprises a revised version of allowable dependent claim 2 written in independent form to incorporate the subject matter of base claim 1. In view of the Examiner's indication of allowability concerning dependent claim 2, which has been rewritten in independent form as new claim 10, claim 10 is in allowable form. Claims 11-13 depend, either directly or indirectly, on allowable claim 10 and are therefore likewise allowable. Moreover, claims 11 and 12-13 include the subject matter of allowable claims 3 and 9, respectively, and are separately patentable for the reasons indicated by the Examiner concerning claims 3 and 9.

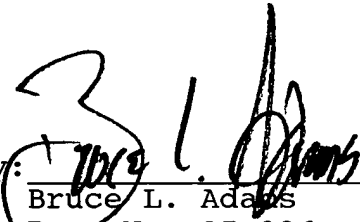
The specification has been amended in editorial respects to correct informalities, improve the wording and provide an antecedent basis for the claim language. A new, more descriptive abstract has been added.

Replacement sheets of drawing for Figs. 1, 3 and 4 have been submitted and in which descriptive text has been added for the blank boxes, thereby overcoming the drawing objection. No correction is needed to Figs. 2A-2B as these figures do not contain blank boxes but rather show portions of the magnetic field coils 10, the sample table 20 and the cantilever 21. The replacement sheets overcome the drawing objection and place the drawings in acceptable form.

In view of the foregoing, the application is now believed to be in allowable form. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and passage of the application to issue are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AMENDMENT, COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date indicated below.

Debra Buonincontri
Name

Debra Buonincontri
Signature

MARCH 28, 2006
Date

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Submitted herewith are replacement sheets of drawing for Figs. 1, 3 and 4 which have been corrected to add descriptive text to the blank boxes. Entry of these replacement sheets of drawings is respectfully requested.